

Shaolin Kungfu Dragon & Tiger: Step-by-Step Instructions

The Dragon and Tiger forms in Shaolin Kungfu are classic animal styles, each with distinct characteristics and techniques. Below is a step-by-step breakdown to help you practice the basics of both styles, focusing on stance, movement, and signature techniques.

Tiger Style: Step-by-Step Basics

1. Starting Position

- Stand naturally straight, feet shoulder-width apart.
- Take a deep breath in and out to center yourself^[1].

2. Tiger Claw Formation

- Raise your hands in front of you, fingers spread and slightly bent to form "tiger claws."
- Imagine the power and ferocity of a tiger as you move^[1] ^[2].

3. Stepping and Stance

- Step forward with your left foot into a deep stance (similar to a horse stance, but with more weight forward: 60% on the front leg, 40% on the back)^[1].
- Keep your back straight and shoulders relaxed.

4. Basic Tiger Strike

- With your tiger claws, strike downward forcefully as if grabbing or tearing^[1] ^[2].
- Focus on channeling power from your waist and shoulders through your arms.

5. Tiger Punch Combination

- From the stance, throw three vertical punches in quick succession, retracting each hand quickly to guard your face^[2].
- Step back slightly with each punch to maintain balance and defensive positioning.

6. Tiger Blocking and Counter

- Cross both hands downward at a 45-degree angle to block, then open and press out at shoulder height^[2].
- Use your body weight and twist your waist to add power to the block.

7. Tiger Circular Strike

- Circle your arm from one side to the other, leading with your tiger claw, and finish with a low stance and a strong downward strike^[2].
- This move can be used to deflect an attack and counter simultaneously.

Dragon Style: Step-by-Step Basics

1. Dragon Stance and Flow

- Begin in a relaxed stance, focusing on fluid, circular movements.
- The dragon style emphasizes softness, flexibility, and guiding force rather than meeting it head-on^[3].

2. Dragon Block (Brush Block)

- Use an inward middle block, but instead of a hard stop, guide the opponent's force aside with a soft, flowing motion^[3].
- Move your body towards the opponent as your hand circles back, blending with their attack.

3. Transition from Tiger to Dragon

- Start with a hard tiger block, then soften your arm and body to transition into a dragon-style brush block^[3].
- This teaches you to move from forceful resistance to adaptive redirection.

4. Dragon Counter Techniques

- After deflecting, spiral your opponent's arm up and around, using your body to control their balance^[3].
- Follow with a vertical wrist pin or a lock, using soft but controlled pressure.

5. Dragon Punch and Footwork

- Use circular, spiraling punches that follow your body's rotation.
- Step with the inside of your foot (inner gate) to gain a positional advantage^[4] ^[3].

Dragon & Tiger Combination Practice

- Practice sequences where you start with a Tiger-style block or strike, then transition into Dragon-style redirection and counter.
- For example, block with a tiger claw, then immediately flow into a dragon brush block and counter with a spiral lock or punch^[4] ^[3].

In Shaolin Kung Fu the Dragon must grow out of the Tiger. For this to happen the blocks must proceed from hard to soft... Guide, instead of break. ^[3]

Tips for Practice

- Always warm up and stretch before practicing animal forms.
- Focus on the intent and spirit of each animal: Tiger is powerful and direct, Dragon is fluid and adaptive.
- Practice slowly at first, emphasizing correct form and transitions, then gradually increase speed and power^[1] ^[2].
- Use a mirror or record yourself to check your posture and technique.

For more detailed visual instructions, refer to video tutorials on Tiger and Dragon forms^{[1] [2] [5]}. Consistent practice will help you embody the unique qualities of both the Tiger and the Dragon in your Shaolin Kungfu.



1. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZsEZ1KZ_HQ
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-CfvhfROOM>
3. <http://monstermartialarts.com/martial-arts-articles/kung-fu-techniques-from-the-tiger-and-dragon/>
4. <https://shaolin.org/general-3/introduction/introduction08.html>
5. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W1qV4CeINTM>